

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

The Trusted Expert and Internationally Recognized Leader for all Postsecondary Student Transitions

Living-Learning Communities as a High-Impact Educational Practice



Jennifer R. Keup

ACUHO-I Living-Learning Programs Conference

October 3-6, 2013

Providence, RI



Overview

Talk a bit about:

- Brief history of learning communities and livinglearning communities
- Introduction and evaluation of LC & LLC as highimpact practices (HIPs)
- Current opportunities toward LC & LLC as HIPs

Qualifications

- Not necessarily new information
- Contextualized with FYE
- Time!!!

Goal: Challenge



Data Sources: Center Surveys

- 2009 and 2012-2013 administrations of the National Survey of First-Year Seminars
 - Institutional survey administered in Fall-Winter
 - 2009: N = 890 institutions; 2012-2013: N = 804 institutions
- 2009 National Survey of Peer Leadership
 - Student survey administered in Spring
 - 1,972 survey respondents from 142 institutions
- 2008 National Survey of Sophomore Initiatives
 - Institutional survey administered in Spring
 - -N = 315 institutions



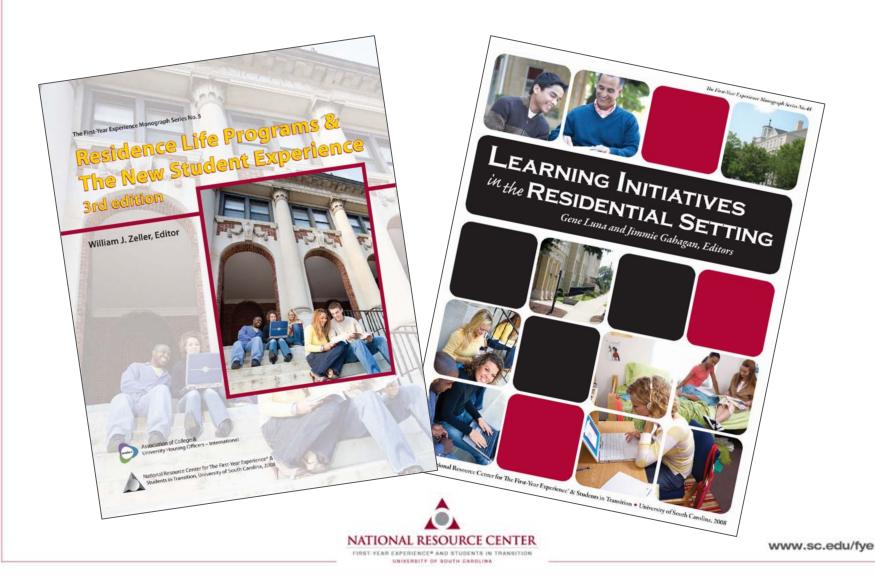
Data Sources: Center Resources

Publications

- Exploring the Evidence: Initiatives in the First College Year
 (2008)
- The First-Year Experience in American Higher Education:
 An Annotated Bibliography (4th edition) (2007)
- Integrating the First-Year Experience: The Role of First-Year Seminars in Learning Communities (2004)
- Articles in the Journal of The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition
- Resources
 - FYE Resources Page
 - Listserv entries



Data Sources: Center Publications



Other Data Sources

- JNGI: Enhancing Student Success and Retention throughout Undergraduate Education: A National Study (2012)
- AAC&U research on High-Impact Practices
- National Survey of Living-Learning Programs (2004 & 2007)
- Wabash National Survey of Liberal Arts Education (WNSLAE) (2006 & 2009)



However, let's be sure to begin at the beginning...





How far back in higher education history do we need to go to find evidence of the earliest living**learning** communities?

- 6th Century BCE: Classical Greece
 - 2. 425: Imperial University of Constantinople
 - 3. 1270: Oxford College
 - 4. 1636: Harvard College
 - 1927: University of Wisconsin's "Experimental College"



History

"Learning alone might be got by lectures and reading; but it was only by studying and disputing, eating and drinking, playing and praying as members of the same collegiate community, in close and constant association with each other and with their tutors, that the priceless gift of character could be imparted to young men."

Henry Dunster, President of Harvard

(1640-1654)





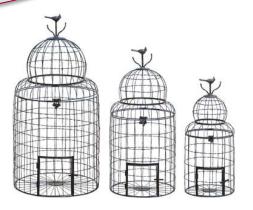


History

"Chambers in colleges are too often made the nurseries of every vice and cages of unclean birds." Manasseh Culter, Founder of Ohio University (1804)









History

Housing facilities are "to provide physical comfort and beauty of surroundings in an intellectually stimulating atmosphere, so that the residence halls become an integral part of the University's plan for education"

George A. Works, Dean of Students,
University of Chicago (founded in 1892)





George D. Kuh, John H. Schuh, Elizabeth J. Whitt, & Associates

Successful Approaches to Fostering Student Learning and Development Outside the Classroom











SUSTAINING

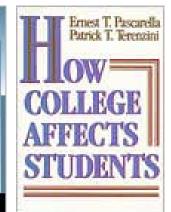
LEARNING

& IMPROVING

COMMUNITIES

Ernest T. Pascarella Patrick T. Terenzini How COLLEGE AFFECTS UDENTS

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CHALLENGING ® SUPPORTING THE FIRST-YEAR STUDENT

A HANDBOOK for IMPROVING THE FIRST YEAR OF COLLEGE

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High-Impact Educational Practices

First-Year Seminars and Experiences

Many schools now build into the curriculum first-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies. First-year seminars can also involve students with cutting-edge questions in scholarship and with faculty members' own research.

Common Intellectual Experiences

The older idea of a "core" curriculum has evolved into a variety of modern forms, such as a set of required common courses or a vertically organized general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community (see below). These programs often combine broad themes—e.g., technology and society, global interdependence—with a variety of curriculation to contribute to the variety of curriculation of the students.

Learning Communities

The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with "big questions" that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberatedy link "liberal arts" and "professional courses"; others feature service learning.

Writing-Intensive Courses

These courses emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences in different disciplines. The effectiveness of this repeated practice "across the curriculum" has led to parallel efforts in such areas as quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, and, on some campuses, ethical inquiry.

Collaborative Assignments and Projects

Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one's own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research.



Undergraduate Research

Many colleges and universities are now providing research experiences for students in all disciplines. Undergraduate research, however, has been most prominently used in science disciplines. With strong support from the National Science Foundation and the research community, scientists are reshaping their courses to commerct key concepts and questions with students' early and active involvement in systematic investigation and research. The goal is to involve students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions.

Diversity/Global Learning

Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address U.S. diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore "difficult differences" such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad.

Service Learning, Community-Based Learning

In these programs, field-based "experiential learning" with confinunity partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required pay of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with places they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both apply what they are learning in real-world settings and reflect in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life.

Internships

Internships are another increasingly common form of experiential learning. The idea is to provide students with direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. If the internship is taken for course credit, students complete a project or paper that is approved by a faculty member.

Capstone Courses and Projects

Whether they're called "senior capstones" or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of "best work," or an exhibit of artwork. Capstones are offered both in departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well.

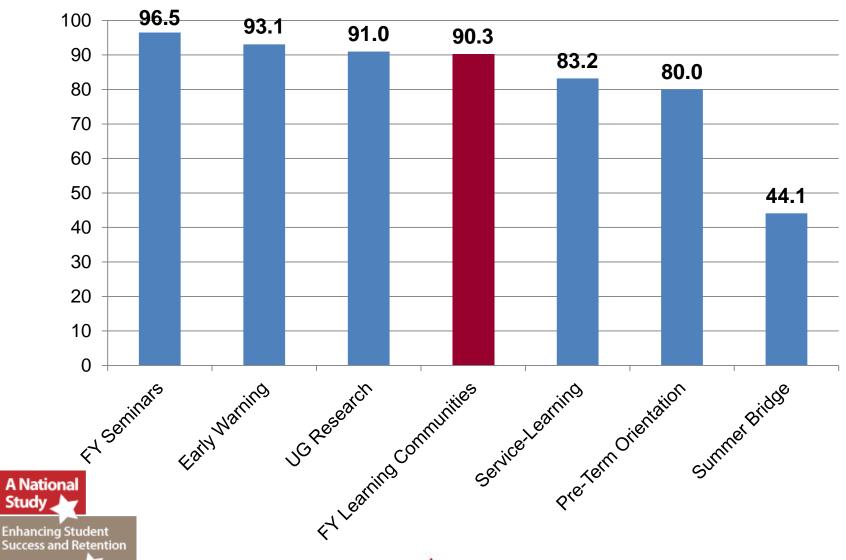


Association of American Colleges and Universities



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Throughout Undergraduate Education



Definitions

"Learning communities are defined...as 'curricular structures in which small cohorts of students – typically 15-25 – are co-enrolled in two or more courses generally from different disciplines with or without a common residential environment.' Learning communities are one of the most well-known curricular interventions that support not only learning, but retention."

"The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with "big questions" that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberately link "liberal arts" and "professional courses"; others feature service learning."



Enhancing Student

Success and Retention



Association of American Colleges and

Typologies

- Paired or clustered courses
- Student cohorts in larger classes (FIGs)
- Team-taught programs
- Living-learning communities



Typologies

- Paired or clustered courses
- Student cohorts in larger classes (FIGs)
- Team-taught programs
- Living-learning communities
 - Participants live together on campus
 - Share in an academic or cocurricular endeavor
 - Engage in structured activities in their residence environment that emphasize faculty and peer interaction
 - Use special resources in their residential environment

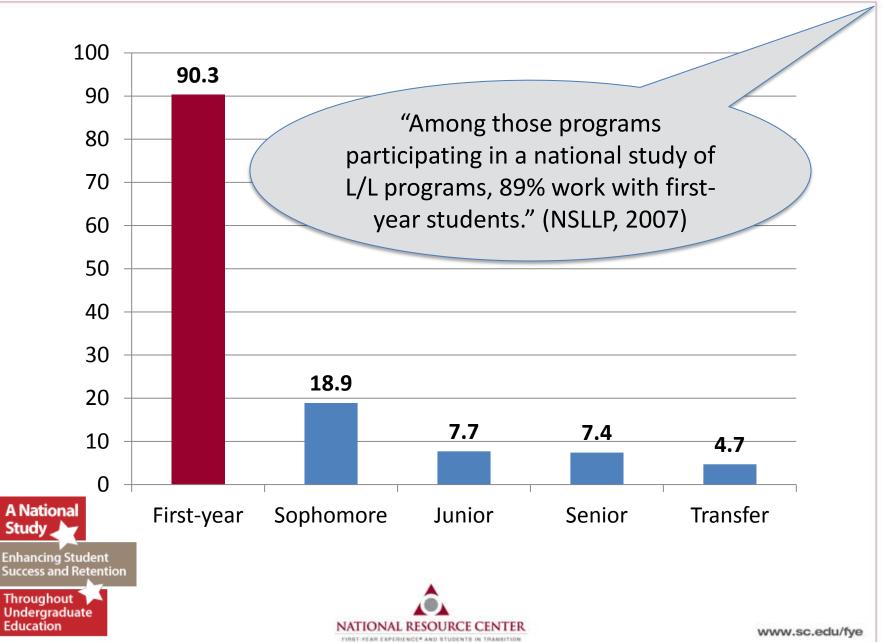




Learning Community Characteristics	%
Students co-enrolled in ≥2 courses & faculty work closely to link course content	60
One of the courses is a first-year seminar (FYS)	58
Learning communities are connected to residential living	56
Courses in a learning community are linked by a common intellectual theme	52
Student affairs professionals are involved in the delivery of out-of-class content	48
Co-enrollment in >2 courses but faculty have limited interaction	34







UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

LC Characteristics in FYS	%
Co-enrollment, not all courses	74
Coordinated course content	36
Common set of theme-based experiences outside of the course	34
Living-learning community	31
Course content connected by common intellectual theme	26
Co-enrollment, all other courses	9
Other	8





Not so fast. What does it mean to be HIP?



Be on the lookout for Hipsters like these ...

www.sc.edu/fye

"High-Impact Practices..."

...are curricular and cocurricular structures that tend to draw upon high-quality pedagogies and practices in pursuit of 21st century learning outcomes; they are "teaching and learning practices that have been widely tested and have been shown to be beneficial for college students..,[toward] increase rates of retention and student engagement."

Kuh, 2008



High-Impact Practices

- First-Year Seminars and Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- **Learning Communities**
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative
 Assignments &
 Projects

- ☑ Undergraduate Research
- Service Learning,
 Community-Based
 Learning
- **Internships**



Characteristics of High-Impact Practices

- Creates an investment of time and energy
- Includes interaction with faculty and peers about substantive matters
- High expectations
- Includes frequent feedback
- Exposure to diverse perspectives
- Demands reflection and integrated learning
- Accountability



Bottom Line

- We often overemphasis the impact of offering and participating in HIPs on learning outcomes and retention
- It is what we are doing within the HIPs that is contributing to these outcomes
- Better understanding of the processes
- Embrace innovation within these practices





"High-Impact Practices..."

Integration

...are curricular and cocurricular structures that tend to draw upon high-quality pedagogies

Outcomes practices in pursuit of 21st century
learning outcomes; they are "teaching and learning practices that have been widely tested and have been shown to be beneficial for college students. [toward] increase rates of retention and student engagement."

Kuh, 2008

Assessment



OUTCOMES



"Excuse me," said Alice, "how do I get out of here?"

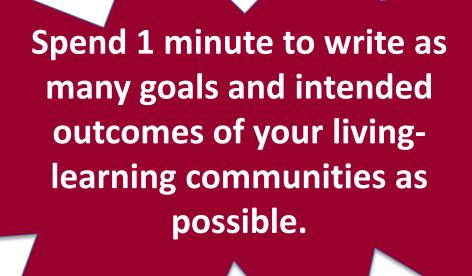
"That depends a great deal on where you want to end up" said the cat.

"I don't care where I end up," said Alice, "I just want out!"

"Well," said the cat, "if it doesn't matter where you end up, it doesn't matter which road you take."

Carroll, 1865







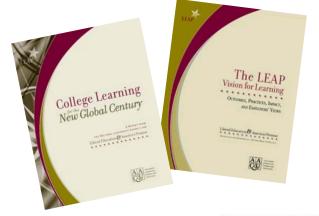
Important Criteria for Outcomes

- Appropriate
- Meaningful
- Measurable
- Manageable
- Balance achievable with aspirational



21st Century Learning Outcomes

- Knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world
- Intellectual and practical skills
- Personal and social responsibility
- Integrative learning





Metacompetencies for Employability

- Build & sustain working professional relationships
- Analyze, evaluate, and interpret data from various sources
- Engage in continuous learning
- Oral communication and persuasion
- Project planning and management



Gardner, 2009

Metacompetencies for Employability

- Ability to create new knowledge
- Understand the impact of company practices in a global setting
- Build a successful team
- Coach, mentor, & develop others
- Initiative



Gardner, 2010



Domains for FYE Outcomes

- Retention
- Academic skills/experiences
- Campus connection
- Interpersonal skills
- Personal development
- Civic engagement/democratic citizenship
- Employability



Examples of FYE Outcomes

Retention

- Persistence to the second year
- Graduation rates
- Academic skills/experiences
 - Analytical & critical thinking skills
 - Development of educational career goals
 - Declaring a major
 - Knowledge integration & application
 - Academic engagement
 - Academic achievement
 - Cognitive complexity
 - Study skills
 - Introduction to a discipline

Campus connection

- Knowledge of university requirements
- Ability to identify, seek, & use organizational resources
- Connection to campus community
- Understanding history & traditions
- Involvement in cocurricular activities
- Satisfaction with student experience

Interpersonal skills

- Conflict resolution
- Written & oral communication skills
- Development of a social support network
- Multicultural competence



Examples of FYE Outcomes

Personal development

- Time management
- Identity exploration & development
- Values clarification
- Practical competence
- Life management skills
- Physical health
- Emotional wellness
- Moral and ethical development
- Leadership skills

Civic engagement/democratic citizenship

- Participation in service
- Engagement in philanthropy
- Political awareness/engagement
- Political activism/social advocacy
- Community involvement

Employability

- Analyzing a problem from various sources
- Innovation and creation of new knowledge
- Providing direction through interpersonal persuasion
- Ability to integrate ideas and information
- Applying knowledge to a real-world setting
- Ability to coach and mentor others
- Project planning and management
- Engage in continuous learning
- Desireability as a candidate
- Initiative
- Ethical decision-making
- Professionalism
- Ability to build a team
- Others?





Top Learning Community Goals

Goals and Outcomes	%
Student-to-student interaction	86
Higher levels of academic achievement	85
Improved retention and/or graduation rates	83
Faculty-to-student interaction	81
Linkages between different disciplinary	
perspectives	62
Improved critical thinking	60
Faculty-to-faculty collaboration	41





Top 5 Living-Learning Community Goals

Goals and Outcomes	%
Experiencing a smooth academic transition to college	55
Feeling a sense of belonging to the institution	54
Demonstrating openness to views different than one's own	52
Learning about others different than one's self	50
Experiencing a smooth social transition to college	50





Top Goals of Living-Learning Communities in First-Year Seminars

Goals and Outcomes	%
Develop a connection with the institution	49
Develop academic skills	44
Provide orientation to campus resources and	
services	36
Develop critical thinking skills	30
Self-exploration or personal development	21
Create a common first-year experience	19





- Critical thinking/analytical abilities
- Application of knowledge abilities
- Growth in liberal learning
- Growth in personal philosophy
- Diversity appreciation
- Sense of civic engagement
- Smooth academic transition
- Smooth social transition
- Sense of belonging





Low-to-Moderate Effect Size:

- Smooth academic transition
- Smooth social transition
- Sense of belonging





Very Low Effect Size:

- Critical thinking/analytical ability
- Application of knowledge abilities
- Sense of civic engagement
- Growth in liberal learning
- Growth in personal philosophy





Not Significant:

- Growth in cognitive complexity
- Diversity appreciation





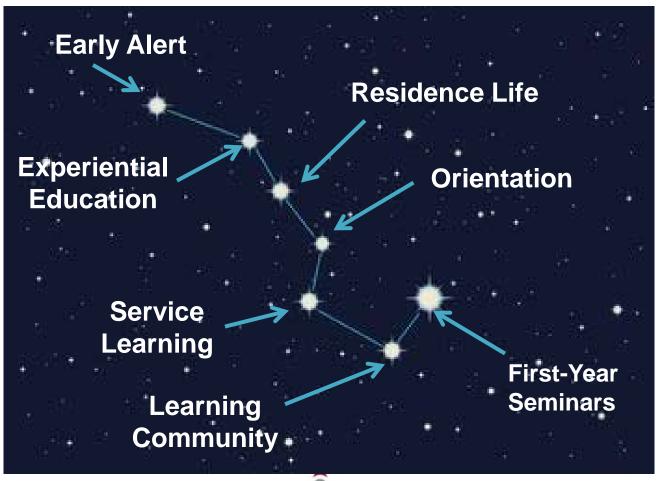
Conclusions

- "Living-learning programs have limited effectiveness in facilitating 'essential learning outcomes.'"
- "However, they have better success with outcomes associated with making the transition to college."
 - Especially appropriate and effective when used for students transitioning to the university
- More likely to achieve outcomes when a LLC includes:
 - Infrastructure
 - Academic components
 - Cocurricular components
 - Integration



Inkelas, 2010

INTEGRATION





A "Constellation" of Support

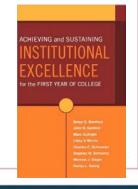
"Excellence [is] characterized by an approach to the first year that spans the curricula and cocurriculum. This approach is central and systemic rather than appended or patched to the core institutional mission."

(Barefoot et al., 2005)



Criteria of FYE "Excellence"

- "Evidence of an intentional, comprehensive approach to improving the first year that is appropriate to an institution's type and mission."
- "Evidence of assessment of the various initiatives that constitute this approach."
- "Broad impact on significant numbers of first-year students, including, but not limited to special student subpopulations."
- "Strong administrative support for first-year initiatives, evidence of institutionalization, and durability over time."
- "Involvement of a wide range of faculty, student affairs professionals, academic administrators, and other constituent groups."



LLC Uniquely Situated for Integration

"a residential education unit in a college or university that is organized on the basis of an academic theme or approach and is intended to integrate academic learning and community living. The unit may or may not be degree granting and may involve collaboration with formal, academic departments outside the unit. It provides formal and/or informal, credit and/or noncredit learning opportunities."

Residential Learning Communities International Clearinghouse Bowling Green State University, 2013



Structural Characteristics of LC/LLC

- 52% did not include <u>any</u> form of academic coursework
- 23% had <u>no</u> faculty involvement
- Only 18% encompassed entire residence hall; 71% were housed within a discrete portion of the hall
- 34% of LC have co-enrollment but faculty have limited interaction
- 85% engaged student affairs staff in some way



Structural Characteristics of LC/LLC

- Frequently linked to first-year seminars, general ed courses, and developmental ed courses in English, reading, and math
- 31% of LLC programs had administrative oversight that represented a combination of student affairs and academic affairs
- 13% of LLC programs had a director that represented a combination of academic and student affairs affiliations and 8% reported to a multi-person board
- LC are often a HIP that connects with other HIPs



HIPs in Combination

89.7% of campuses offered a First-Year Seminar

High-Impact Practice in the FYS	%
Collaborative assignments & projects	67
Diversity/Global learning	59
Writing-intensive	43
Common reading experience	38
Learning community	37
Service-learning	32
Undergraduate research	13





What tools do we have to achieve integration in HIPs and LC/LLC?



Structures, Systems, & **Marketing Strategies Assessment/ People Outcomes**



Structures, Systems, & Strategies

- 1. Know yourself
- 2. Academic focus
- 3. Selection & training
- 4. Advocacy
- 5. Anticipate workload
- 6. Create relationships
- 7. Be flexible
- 8. Create opportunities
- 9. Use technology
- 10. Create an environment

- Shared technology and alert systems
- Common documentation
- Organizational structures
- The power of physical spaces
- Funding sources

Marketing

- Logos
- Branding
 - Subsidiary of university branding
 - Psychological impact
- Theme
 - Continuous
 - Annual
- Merchandise



People

- Early champion
- Leadership
 - Formal/appointed (e.g., Director)
 - Informal
- Wide representation
- Ambassadors
- Student leaders
- Gatekeepers
- Objectors

Who are the new generation of partners & advocates?

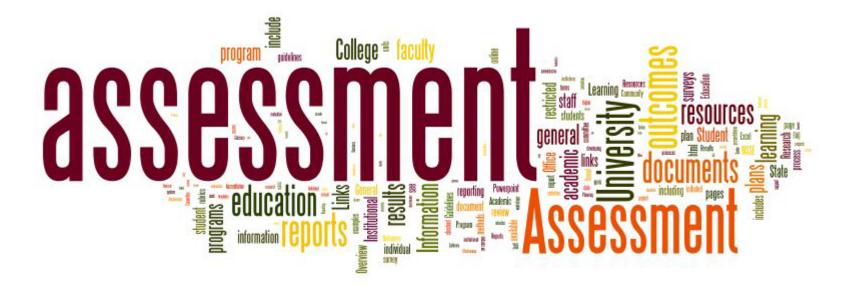


Assessment/Outcomes

- Common learning outcomes
 - Related to branding
 - Appropriate to LLC
- Omnibus surveys
- Longitudinal/comprehensive assessment strategy
- Linked to accreditation/self-studies



ASSESSMENT





Why Assess?

- "High-impact practices...combine and concentrate other empirically validated pedagogic approaches into a single multideminational activity that unfolds over a period of time. Only when they are implemented well and continually evaluated...will we realize their considerable potential." Kuh, 2010
- "Residence life administrators will be called upon to determine the impact of their environments. It will not be enough to say that we create effective environments, we must demonstrate it." McKuskey, 2008

STUDENT LEARNING IN THE RESIDENCE HALLS

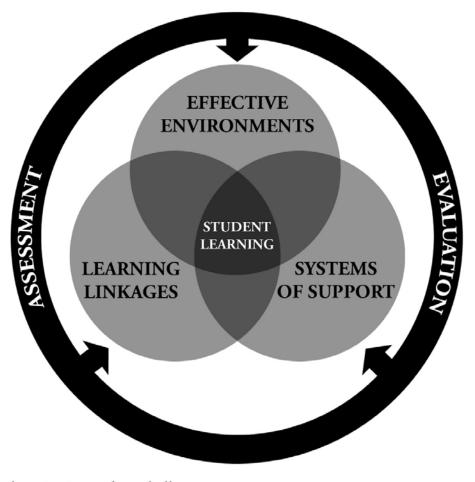


Figure 1. Student learning in residence halls.

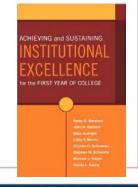




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Are we evaluating HIPs? Not Enough!

- 59% of respondents to the National Survey of First-Year Seminars say that they have assessed their seminar in the past three years.
- 58% of institutions responding to the National Survey of Sophomore Year Initiatives say that they have <u>ever</u> evaluated their second-year initiatives.
- 56% of institutions responding to the National Survey of Capstone Experiences indicate that they have assessed their seminar in the past three years.
- 8-13% of respondents to these instruments say that they "don't know" if these assessment efforts have taken place.

What is Being Measured?

	%
Improved retention and/or graduation rates	47
Higher levels of student-to-student interaction	41
Higher levels of academic achievement	36
Higher levels of faculty-to-student interaction	36
No research has been conducted	27
Greater understanding of disciplinary linkages	21
Higher levels of faculty collaboration	18
Improved critical thinking	17





What is Being Measured?

- Student characteristics
- Needs assessment
- Awareness of campus resources
- Service utilization
- Satisfaction with the learning community experience, residential experience, faculty, and/or the institution



Misalignment

"Too often program objectives represent articulation of broad learning objectives but the assessment strategy relies upon transactional measures that do not adequately capture progress and achievement of student learning and program goals."

Keup & Kilgo, forthcoming



Assessment Strategies

FYS Assessment	Percent
Student course evaluation	87
Institutional data	71
Survey instrument	53
Direct assessment of student learning outcomes	53
Focus groups with instructors	35
Program review	33
Focus groups with students	31
Individual interviews with instructors	20
Individual interviews with students	12

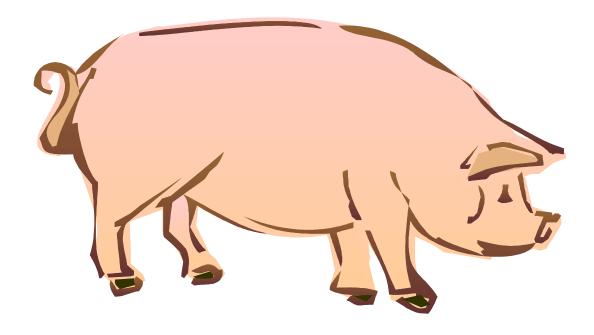


LC/LLC Assessment Considerations

- "Just do it!"
- Alignment with desired outcomes that are appropriate, meaningful, measurable....
- "As assessment plan should be developed in the context of other evaluation activities taking place." (Laufgraben, 2005)
- Self-selection and environmental bias
- Multiple voices (faculty, staff, students, etc.)
- Mixed methodology
- Use existing data
- Timeline



Assessment Feedback Loop



"You can't fatten a pig by weighing it."



THE FUTURE: MEETING NEEDS, SETTING AGENDAS



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Leadership Opportunities for LLC

- Partnership between academic & student affairs
 - Differential expertise but shared interest
 - Reclaim "academic focus" of residential experience
- Engage new partners in student success,
 especially from business and auxiliary services
- Take LLC beyond social engineering into truly integrative learning experience
- Assessment of a holistic learning experience
- Identify new HIPs



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High-Impact Practices

- First-Year Seminars and Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- **Learning Communities**
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative
 Assignments &
 Projects

- ☑ Undergraduate Research
- Service Learning,
 Community-Based
 Learning
- **Internships**
- Capstone Courses & Projects



Highly Transferable

"It stands to reason that these key conditions can be adapted and incorporated into any teaching and learning situation inside or outside the classroom to promote higher levels of student performance."

(Kuh in Brownell & Swaner, 2010, p. xi)



Characteristics of High-Impact Practices

- Creates an investment of time and energy
- Includes interaction with faculty and peers about substantive matters
- High expectations
- Includes frequent feedback
- Exposure to diverse perspectives
- Demands reflection and integrated learning
- Accountability



Possibilities for HIPs

- Residential life
- Employment
- Campus activities
- Student media
- Advising
- Physical fitness and wellness
- Athletics

- Performance groups
- Transactional experiences
 - Course registration
 - Parking
 - Housing
- Peer leadership

Peer Leadership: A Definition

"Students who have been **selected and trained** to offer educational services to their peers. These services are **intentionally designed** to assist in the adjustment, satisfaction, and persistence of students toward attainment of their educational goals, Students performing in [these] paraprofessional roles **are usually compensated** in some manner for their services and are **supervised by qualified professionals**."

(Ender & Newton, 2000, 2010)



Most Common Sponsors of PLE

Campus-Based Organization	Percent
Academic	59
Orientation	32
Residence Halls	30
Community Service	25
Other	15
Student Government	12



Self-Rated Change in Skills

Skill	% Reporting "Stronger" or "Much Stronger"
Interpersonal communication	94
Organization	81
Time management	80
Presentation	79
Written communication	61
Academic	51



Self-Rated Impact on Undergraduate Experience

Experience	% "Increased"
Knowledge of campus resources	91
Meaningful interaction with peers	89
Meaningful interaction with staff	86
Meaningful interaction with faculty	83
Feeling of belonging at institution	81
Understanding of diverse people	79
Interaction with diverse people	78
Desire to persist at institution	71



High-Impact Practices

- First-Year Seminars & Experiences
- **✓** Common Intellectual Experiences
- **Learning Communities**
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- **✓** Internships

- **✓** Undergraduate Research
- ☑ Diversity/Global Learning
- Service Learning,
 Community-Based
 Learning
- ☐ Capstone Courses & Projects
- Peer Leadership

Takeaways

- Write down three things that you learned from this presentation.
- Write down three things you plan to do with the information that you learned from this presentation.
- Write down three people you need to engage in order to do what you want to do with the information that you learned from this presentation.

Questions & Comments

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